

Working for Recreation

The 2006-2010
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Strategic Plan



Dirk Kempthorne
Governor
State of Idaho



Idaho Park and Recreation Board

Region I – Steve Klatt,
Sandpoint

Region II - Randal F. Rice,
Moscow

Region III - Ernest J. Lombard, Chair,
Eagle

Region IV - Latham Williams,
Ketchum

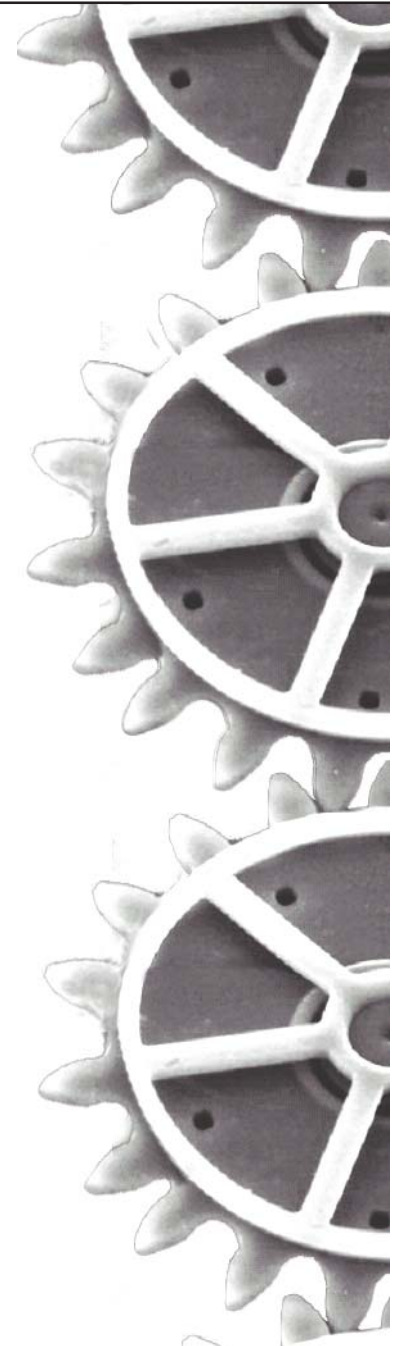
Region V - Jean S. McDevitt,
Pocatello

Region VI - Douglas A. Hancey,
Rexburg

Staff

Director, Robert L. Meinen

Comprehensive Planning, Research and
Review Manager, Rick Just





Mission

To improve the quality of life in Idaho through outdoor recreation and resource stewardship.

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The Agency

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation was created in 1965 through the vision of then Governor Robert E. Smylie and key members of the Idaho Legislature. The language of the agency's enabling legislation still guides and describes the department today:

"It is the intent of the legislature that the department of parks and recreation shall formulate and put into execution a long range, comprehensive plan and program for the acquisition or leasing, planning, protection, operation, maintenance, development and wise use of areas of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historic, archaeological or scientific interest, to the end that the health, happiness, recreational opportunities and wholesome enjoyment of life of the people may be further encouraged."

Today the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation manages 30 state parks, administers the state's registration program for snowmobiles, boats and off-highway vehicles, and manages a series of outdoor recreation grant programs that provide facilities and services to a wide variety of recreationists and

the local governmental and nongovernmental organizations that serve them.

Vision

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will live up to the trust of Idahoans by striving to understand the recreational needs of the people, practicing wise resource stewardship and carefully maintaining facilities. We will promote ethical behavior, safe practices and the sharpening of outdoor skills. While recognizing private property rights the agency will protect access to public lands. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will continue its role as a leader in outdoor recreation through partnerships, innovation and good work.

Values

In 2000 Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation staff developed the following value statement as a part of the strategic planning process.

"We are innovators in outdoor recreation, committed to excellent service and resource stewardship. We foster experiences that renew the human spirit and promote community vitality."

Stakeholder Involvement

What direction should the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation take over the next five years? Every stakeholder should play a part in that decision. In developing the 2005-2009 Strategic plan, the agency set out to methodically gather information from its constituency to help set its future course.

Public Involvement Meetings

During the spring and summer of 2004, comprehensive planning staff conducted public meetings in each of Idaho's 44 counties to gauge community outdoor recreation needs. We listened to those who chose to speak during the meetings and gave participants an opportunity to submit written comments regarding local outdoor recreation needs, their favorite recreational activities and the role IDPR plays in each.

News releases announcing the meeting appeared in local media. In addition, city and county officials were invited to participate. Those who were unable to make the meetings had the opportunity to comment via a special

website created for that purpose. These efforts resulted in 291 written comments.

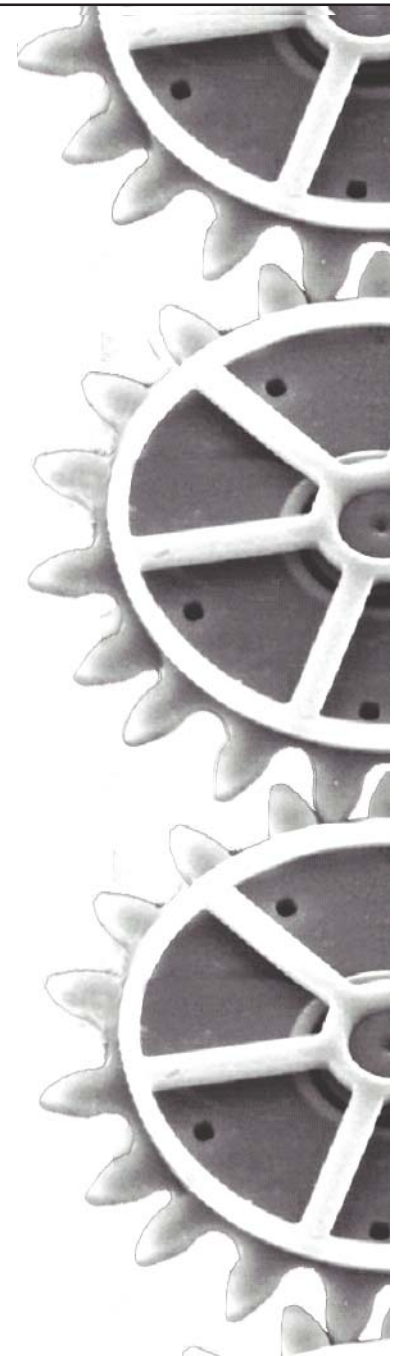
Partner Focus Groups

Concurrent with IDPR's public involvement efforts, comprehensive planning staff conducted eight focus group sessions across the state to better understand how the agency fits into the broader outdoor recreation picture. Field staff from the Forest Service, BLM, BOR, Idaho Department of Lands, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Idaho Department of Fish and Game participated in the sessions, along with county, city and recreation district personnel.

Statewide Needs Assessment

Using what we learned from the public involvement meetings and focus group sessions, comprehensive planning designed a survey instrument to assess Idaho outdoor recreation needs, gather information on outdoor recreation issues, and measure participation rates in a broad range of activities.

Because needs are likely to vary from region to region, the agency mailed out 3,000 response cards in each of the state's six regions. Those





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who received the cards had the option of participating in the survey immediately by going to a password protected website, or requesting a printed survey by dropping postage paid card in the mail.

IDPR received 1,234 valid responses from the electronic survey, and ((1,000)) valid written surveys. This gave a confidence level of 99 percent at plus or minus 3 points on a statewide basis. Regional levels varied somewhat, but returns were high enough in each region to give a confidence level of 95 percent at plus or minus 5 points.

Agency Focus Groups

Recognizing that agency staff and the Idaho Park and Recreation Board are critical stakeholders in this process, planning staff conducted three focus group sessions to better understand their views. Senior staff and the Idaho Park and Recreation Board participated in concurrent sessions, then came together to prioritize strategic issues each group had identified. Then, using senior staff members as group facilitators, we conducted an all staff session at the agency annual conference to identify issues and needs.

Key Legislators

With an initial sense of public, partner and staff needs in hand, IDPR Director Robert L. Meinen began talking individually with legislators, primarily from House and Senate Natural Resource committees and the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee, to learn their views on what direction the agency should take over the next five years.

Bringing it all Together

Inherently, a variety of divergent views surfaced in this multi-faceted process. Certain themes began to emerge, though, some from all groups, and some from one stakeholder group or another. Our partners in outdoor recreation talked about the unique role IDPR could play in bringing diverse interests together. Senior staff and the Idaho Park Board were most concerned about adequate funding for outdoor recreation and protecting access. IDPR staff spoke strongly about the need for maintenance in our parks and development of facilities and opportunities that match public need. The public echoed many of those themes, and brought resource

protection and outdoor recreation education needs to light.

It was the job of IDPR's comprehensive planning staff to bring those needs together into a series of goals broad enough to encompass the majority of needs, yet specific enough

to give the agency direction for the next five years.

On January 12, 2005, the Idaho Park and Recreation Board reviewed draft goals for the agency and, with minor modification, approved The Three Initiatives (below).

The Three Initiatives

Focus On Core Responsibilities—

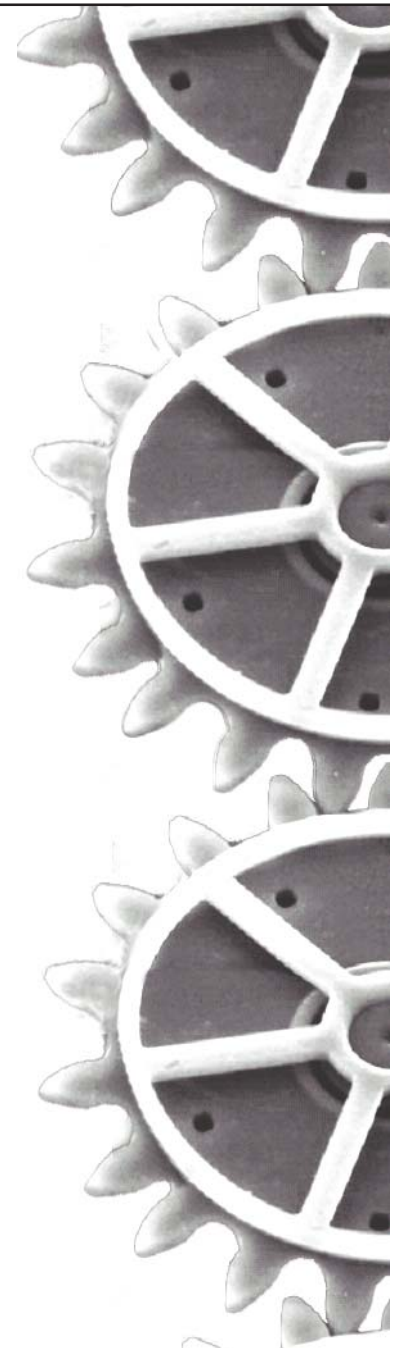
- Consider the day-to-day management of our legislatively authorized parks and programs our first priority
- Devote a significant share of agency resources to improving the condition of our facilities
- Determine what outdoor recreation facilities are needed by the public and determine the best way to see that they are provided
- Be responsive to scheduling resources to customer requests through an enhanced reservation system

Address The Issues Associated With Growing Demand—

- Assure public access for outdoor recreation through key land acquisitions, easements, education, and partnerships
- Provide education, mediation and regulatory programs to enhance user opportunities and experiences
- Seek ways to bring sustainable funding for outdoor recreation into alignment with demand

Provide Outdoor Recreation Leadership—

- Assume a leadership role in seeking partnerships with other agencies, NGOs and the private sector to enhance outdoor recreation
- Improve communication with the public and partners about outdoor recreation opportunities and issues





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Implementation

Senior agency staff will develop performance measures for Idaho Park and Recreation Board approval no later than August 1, 2005. Those five to ten measures, each citing the division responsible for their implementation, will become the agency Scorecard. At each quarterly meeting of the Board, staff will give a progress report and seek Board direction on any needed correction to the Scorecard. Annually, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will make a report and supporting documentation readily available to the Idaho Legislature and the general public, in accordance with controlling statute.

Budget decisions of the agency will focus heavily on items that will lead to achievement of Strategic Plan Goals.

Director Meinen will ask all agency supervisors to review the performance measures and include items in each individual's workplan that will support one or more of them. Throughout the year the internal communications program in the agency will take every opportunity to keep the goals and performance measures in front of agency employees, through newsletters, web

pages, conferences and other available methods.

While most of the metrics developed by the agency will continue year after year, serving as indicators of IDPR's service to Idahoans, some will end upon the completion of a particular initiative. Each year it is likely that senior staff will develop one or more new performance measures that will help the agency move toward its goals. The Idaho Park and Recreation Board will review and approve each. In addition, the germane committees of the Idaho Legislature will have the opportunity to review all agency performance measures annually and direct measurement changes as they see fit.

All of this Agency's public programs and activities are operated free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against or who would like further information regarding the prohibition of discrimination should write to:

Director

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